

700
UC-NRLF



‡B 182 471

GEOFFREY RUDEL;

OR,

THE PILGRIM OF LOVE.

BY

JOHN GRAHAM,

AUTHOR OF

“A VISION OF FAIR SPIRITS,” AND OTHER POEMS.

LONDON:

T. & W. BOONE, 29, NEW BOND STREET,

AND

J. VINCENT, OXFORD.

MDCCCXXXVI.

LONDON:
MARCHANT, PRINTER, INGRAM-COURT.

953

G 739

geo

PREFACE.

THE following extracts from the life of Geoffrey Rudel, contained in the ' Histoire Littéraire des Troubadours,' will give the outline of the story which I have attempted to versify.

“ Geoffroi Rudel, selon l'historien Provençal de sa vie, étoit prince de Blaiä, c'est à dire, de Blaye, près de Bourdeaux. Un amour singulièrement romanesque le distingue parmi les Troubadours. Ce que nous allons raconter paroîtra sans doute un roman ; mais les siècles de la chevalerie on produit des aventures aussi vraies que peu vraisemblables. Nous examinerons si le récit de l'historien se concilie avec l'histoire du tems. Tripoli, en Palestine, avoit été pris par les Chrétiens l'an 1109, et érigé en compté pour Bertrand de Thoulouse, fils du comte Raimond-Gilles. Cette ville appartenoit encore

aux Chrétiens, lorsque la renommée d'une comtesse de Tripoli vint échauffer l'imagination de Geoffroi Rudel. Sur le portrait que des pélerins firent de sa beauté et de ses vertus, il se sentit transporté d'un désir violent de la voir ; il prit la croix et s'embarqua. Le Troubadour tomba malade dans le vaisseau quand on alloit débarquer à Tripoli. Ses compagnons le crurent mort, le déposerent comme tel dans la première maison. On courut informer la comtesse d'un événement capable de l'intéresser. La passion du Chevalier, les motifs et les circonstances de son voyage, sa cruelle destinée en touchant au port, pénétrèrent cette âme sensible, qui sans le savoir avoit allumé de loin une flamme si étrange ; elle sortit aussitôt pour aller voir la victime de l'amour. Geoffroi respiroit encore—elle l'embrasse—il la voit, et meurt entre ses bras, *en louant Dieu, et le remerciant de lui avoir accordé le seul bien qu'il désiroit.* * * * * * Dès le même jour, soit dévotion ou chagrin, elle se dévoua au cloître.”

GEOFFREY RUDEL;

OR,

THE PILGRIM OF LOVE.

CANTO I.

I.

SPIRIT of Love and Song !—once idly sleeping,
Couch'd in the flower of Eden's fatal tree !
Sister of Knowledge ! e'en in slumber weeping,
For mortal sin and sorrow thence to be—
Angel, if yet thy holy vigil keeping,
Like one lone star above a stormy sea ;
Thou gazest on the sphere which gave thee birth,
Still pure amid th' impurity of earth !

II.

Spirit of Minstrelsy ! who fill'st the soul,
Till, like wine gushing o'er the goblet's brim,
Warm from the lip thy wayward fancies roll—
Or flash from Heav'nward eyes—that else were dim :
Spirit of Beauty ! whose spell-wreathed bowl
Runs like a fiery life thro' vein and limb,
Fill, fill, for me your soul-cup to the brink,
Although the draught be madness—let me drink !

III.

Sweet is that dreamy madness to the few,
For whom the soul with renovated wings
Soars upward ether-borne in airless blue,
Chain'd not by earth, unsoil'd by earthly things—
A joy more real than reason ever knew ;
A sense more exquisite than knowledge brings—
A burning thrill like that intense delight
Which fires the eaglet in his sunward flight.

IV.

These are the Poet's gift—Creation's heir,
Who, loving all things, makes the world his own ;
For him earth teems with creatures ever fair,
For him the star-vault is with splendour strown :
Nature for him each secret charm doth bare,
And in his bosom builds her viewless throne ;
He marks her step—below—around—above—
And kneels at once to worship, and to love.

V.

Oh would that holy gift of song were mine,
Which erst has gladden'd many a child of clay—
Like her's, who trembling knelt before the shrine
Of him, the fabled Warrior-Lord of day,
Till from her lip, o'ercharg'd with warmth divine,
Gush'd like a troubled stream the *mystic* lay.
Oh that such gift were mine !—the lip may dare
To breathe its vow—but who shall list the pray'r ?

VI.

Bow'd is the column—cold the altar-stone,
Snatch'd, rent away the spirit-veiling screen,
And like some olden worshipper thereon,
Alone the ivy wreathes her votive green.
The voice, the God, the temple—all are gone—
Gone from the earth as tho' they ne'er had been—
And only silence eloquently tells
The fate of those time-quenchèd oracles !

VII.

Else could I fitly tell the tale of one,
Who meteor-like, tho' short-lived, was sublime—
The Minstrel of Provence, whose spirit shone
Instinct with that rich birthright of his clime,
Passion—whose deeply wrought expression won
For him a garland in the olden time—
Who drank of that deep fountain till he grew
Love's blind adorer, and its victim too.

VIII.

Then twilight visions of the past should rise,
In mournful beauty floating through my brain ;
She of the raven hair, and starry eyes,
Whose worship woke of old the poet's strain,
Leaving that shrouded sleep wherein she lies,
Should live for me in loveliness again !
Haste thee, Lucinde !—e'en now I breathe the spell,
Haste from the dreamy land where shadows dwell !

IX.

Come with thy lip, all eloquent to plead
Against the tyrannies of time and death—
Twin fiends who hunt together, and do feed
On Love's sweet fame as well as Lovers' breath—
Come with white shoulder clad but in the weed
Of thine enshrouding hair, which wandereth
So bold, that gazing on its place of rest
The eye grows envious of such favour'd guest.

X.

And thou, Rudel ! pale wanderer ! whose yearning
Was quench'd but in the quiet of the grave !
Whose heart, Love's altar, evermore was burning
With flame, by Beauty kindled, thou the slave
Of loveliness unseen ! once more returning,
Gaze upon her, the beautiful, who gave
The unmeant wound by which thy spirit fell,
Like Procris slain by one who lov'd it well.²

XI.

Oh bright was thine, the poet's lot of yore,
And green his path through life's untroubled way—
When monarchs smil'd upon his minstrel lore,
And Beauty lov'd the passion-breathing lay.³
One hand the lance and lute all deftly bore,
The knightly minstrel mingled with the fray—
Then wooed again that wild harp to his side,
Endear'd by danger, like a warrior's bride.

XII.

A warrior while his arm could lift the steel,
A minstrel while his hand could sweep the string,
A wassailer for aye while he could feel
The wine's warm madness in his bosom spring ;
A passion-stirr'd adorer, vow'd to kneel
At Beauty's altar, like the bee whose wing,
Charter'd to roam o'er ev'ry flow'r that blows,
Loves all, though wedded but to one—the rose.

XIII.

And lov'd of all, he wander'd o'er the earth,
Vow'd to a joyous pilgrimage of song ;
Finding by castle proud, or peasant's hearth,
A poet's welcome as he went along.
Him pleasure dower'd with her dream of mirth,
Him strength oft claim'd companion of the strong,
While wisdom mark'd in that half-mournful eye
The fire that shews the gifted of the sky.

XIV.

Woman's ripe cheek flush'd deeper where he came,
Laugh'd the red wine more gladly 'neath his gaze ;
And bright eyes caught fresh lustre from the flame
Of that pent fire which on the spirit preys.
For what were woman's glance or warrior's fame,
Without the minstrel's aye-enduring praise ?
By whom, when eyes are dim and courage cold,
Their strength shall live—their loveliness be told.⁴

XV.

Such was Rudel, the peerless Troubadour,
The slave of Beauty, and of Song the child—
At lady's feet full oft a favour'd wooer,
In courts a bard on whom the mighty smiled—
In battle-press a knight whose lance was sure,
As his mail'd breast by fear was undefiled—
In bow'r the courteous, and in camp the free,
Rudel, the child of song, the flow'r of chevalree !

XVI.

Yet tho' his knee at Beauty's varied shrine
Oft knelt beseechingly, he lov'd but one;
And she dwelt far beyond the ocean brine,
Like a sweet flower unfolded by the sun.
To him she was but as a thing divine,
Which ever-worshipp'd never may be won;
A beam to be adored while thron'd afar,
As the tir'd sailor loves the vesper star.

XVII.

For never yet the pilgrim's eye had dwelt
On her, the phantom of his maniac dream,
Or caught the melody of tones that melt
From lips which Love has kindled by his beam;
Though oft in sleep beside her he had knelt,
By starlit grove or spirit-haunted stream;
When upward gazing, he could nought descry
Save those fair twins—his lov'd one and the sky.

XVIII.

In sleep he knelt before his fancied bride,⁵
Thrill'd by the fullness of his soul's emotion,
While from his lip unearthly passion's tide
Rush'd as the river rushes on to ocean.
Oh sweeter thus in slumber to have died
Ere day broke in upon that wild devotion,
And from their height of bliss his senses hurl'd
Down to their dreary prison-house, the world.

XIX.

Blithely of old before the minstrel lark
His soul went forth to welcome in the ray,
Ere yet the night-star's splendour-stricken spark
Paled to the fiery advent of the day;
And when its banner o'er the yielding dark
Flew victor-like, he pour'd his matin lay,
As song of old from Memnon's statue came
When Morn first touch'd its marble brow with flame.

XX.

But now Morn came, and brought no light to him
For whom life's ray was brightest while he slept ;
Rous'd from that trance, again thro' ev'ry limb
Coldly the thrill of dull remembrance crept.
Day could not kindle thoughts now cold and dim,
Or give those tears which childhood would have wept.
Though the brain wither, manhood must not bring
One healing drop from that deserted spring.

XXI.

And who was she, Rudel, whose beauty clung
Like to the Centaur's venom'd robe around thee ?
The fair unseeing and unseen, who flung
Thus from afar the viewless chain that bound thee ?
E'en from its own despair thy love hath sprung ;
Sent from thine own right hand, the arrow found thee ;
Yet whose the shape, which, snatch'd by morning's beam,
Still came at eve to mingle with thy dream ?

XXII.

Say, was thy phantom-bride of earth a daughter?

Or one of those fair spirit-shapes that dwell
Under the roof of ocean's hollow water,
Waking a voice from ev'ry red-lipp'd shell,
That thus in vain thine eye hath ever sought her?

Or was she born of Fancy's wayward spell?
One of those bright creations of the brain
Which mem'ry seeks to realize—in vain?

XXIII.

She was a daughter of that sunny land
Where dwelt alike religion and romance,
For which with holy lip or zealot hand,
Faith breath'd the vow, and valour bore the lance;
Where thousands pray'd and myriads held the brand—
Some for their God, but more for woman's glance,⁶
The home of Christ—the bright with many a shrine,
The land of promise—lovely Palestine!

XXIV.

Enrich'd by many an honourable scar,
Her sire of old had wander'd o'er the sea,
To snatch in knightly guise the spoils that are
The victor's meed—the birthright of the free.
All fiercely then the Moslem scimitar
Clash'd with the lance of iron chivalry,
Yet valour's arm for once was rais'd in vain,
The weak submitted, and the strong were slain.

XXV.

And there in conquer'd Tripoli he dwelt
As dwells the forest monarch in his den;
War was his creed, and wildly still he dealt
In that lov'd worship with his fellow-men.
And aye the iron cross to which he knelt
Was of that blade which smote the Saracen,
As if he deem'd, like that of heav'n, its rood
More blest because 'twas sanctified by blood.

XXVI.

One only child was his, and mortal love
Snatch'd from the many centred in that one ;
To life's unquiet ark she was the dove,
Ever returning when the day was done,
Bearing to earth hope's blossom from above,
Whose early leaf blows still before the sun :
She was the height of his idolatry,
Thro' which his soul look'd up unto the sky.

XXVII.

She was to him the one unsever'd link
Of that pure chain which at the spirit's birth
Binds to the inner sky's forgotten brink
Heav'n's future heir—the new-born child of earth :
A star whose splendour knew not how to shrink,
A fount whose healing waters felt no dearth,
A shape, who, when Faith's heav'nward eye grew dim,
Stood half-way ministrant 'twixt God and him.

XXVIII.

Death came at length with cold and clammy hand,
Shrouding each pale limb in his garb of might ;
And she was left the ladye of the land,
Like Morn dew-weeping for the death of Night.
She was alone, in earth's surrounding band
What Love was left to bind her to the light ?
Its last frail link with him was cast aside,
The first was broken when her mother died !

XXIX.

Dry those fair eyes so freshly wet with tears,
Lovely Lucinde ! for soon a deeper sorrow,
Blighting the blossom of thine early years,
Shall make to-day forgotten in the morrow.
That keen affliction shall be thine which sears
Like fire the tearless eye, or bids it borrow
From the deep sources of the heart and brain,
Such drops as none may shed and smile again.

XXX.

Why wast thou made so beautiful to know,
Only the sorrow which such beauty brings ?
Since ever on this earth the touch of woe
Seems most to light upon all lovely things.
The first frail bloom that winter layeth low
Is aye the rose—the weed in safety springs ;
For Death young bridegroom loves to be a guest,
Like the Flow'r-worm within the fairest breast.

XXXI.

Thy fate is twin'd with his, that minstrel boy,
Albeit thou dwellest on a distant shore ;
Unknowing thou art destin'd to destroy,
Thyself, unhappy one ! the ark that bore
The treasure of thy love. Sorrow and joy
For thee shall cease to be, and in the core
Of thy dark desolate heart shall live at last
No passion, save the mem'ry of the past.

XXXII.

Return we now to him ; my song must tell
How first his fate was linkèd unto thee ;
How from thine eyes the passion-bolt that fell,
Smiting his heart as lightning splits the tree,
Thus from the distant land where thou didst dwell,
Could travel o'er the intervening sea,
Gifted with Love's omnipotence, to slay,
In his Provençal home, a victim faraway.

XXXIII.

And where on earth could young enthusiast crave,
Sunny Provence ! a fairer home than thine ?
Land of the minstrel ! birthplace of the brave !
Bright with the cluster'd tresses of the vine,—
Whose atmosphere is love, whose pilgrim wave
Steals amid music to its ocean shrine,
Whose sky sleeps mirror'd in the gazer's heart,—
Sunny Provence, how beautiful thou art ! ⁷

XXXIV.

Born 'neath that burning clime, whose ev'ry ray
Was in his soul as in a temple shrin'd,
E'en from the morn of childhood's sunny day,
Tho' found among, he was not *of* mankind.
With them he walk'd the earth, but far away
Soar'd on its pathless track the poet's mind,
Snatch'd like a borrow'd spark of heav'nly flame
Back to the fiery region whence it came.

XXXV.

He held unseen communion with the sky,
And made each star companion of his dream,
Wooing their gentle beauty from on high
To the calm mirror of some quiet stream ;
And thus perchance in childish fantasy,
Nearer to their soft light himself would deem,
Than if his wearied eye must climb the space
Of that deep blue which is their dwelling-place.

XXXVI.

And she, the Moon, Eve's melancholy queen,
Rob'd in the buried sun's remember'd light,
(Like faith, still fed by lustre which *has* been,
On thro' the gloom of sorrow's darkest night,)
Bent to his passionate spell her brow serene,
And smote his spirit with her glance of might ;
That glance which maddens all it dwells upon,
E'en as of old it smote Endymion.

XXXVII.

And like that youthful worshipper of old,
Whose airy lute sigh'd o'er the Latmian hill,
When sleep o'er-canopied his mountain fold,
And to the night each cedar-leaf was still—
He drank her smile so passionately cold,
And bared his warm breast to her glances chill ;
Till stirr'd within, the minstrel spirit wove
Its earliest song—the Eloquence of Love.

RUDEL'S FIRST SONG.

TO THE MOON.

1.

Bright isles there are many
In Ether's blue sea ;
But I look not on any
So lovely as thee !

2.

The stars sit at even,
Each orb on its throne ;
A bright host in heav'n,
But thou art alone.

3.

More lov'd, because lonely,
Thou ever shalt be ;
We gaze on them only,
But kneel unto thee.

4.

O'er forest and fallow
And time-shatter'd wall,
Thy light seems to hallow
Wherever it fall.

5.

With eye melancholy,
It looks on the wave;
And renders more holy
The gloom of the grave.

6.

Like us, briefly reigning,
Thy lustre on high
At the fullest is waning,
Is bright but to die.

7.

But oh, like thy sorrow,
May life and its pain
In the sun of to-morrow
Be brighten'd again !

XXXVIII.

Bright was the shrine to which his thoughts were vow'd,
And pure the incense which he offer'd there ;
He built his soul's pavilion in the cloud,
Sweeping in fancy thro' the starlit air.
For aye in love his soul was inly bow'd
To all that heav'n could shew of bright and fair ;
Since first in childish days he mark'd her spread,
Like a calm ocean arching over head.

XXXIX.

He lov'd her when the morn with orient ray
Woke o'er the mist-clad mountain-tops afar ;
He lov'd her when, at eve she melting lay,
Flush'd by the light of his retreating car ;
He lov'd her when, with widow'd mantle gray,
She sought the aid of many a vassal star—
To watch thro' night with sleepless eye, until
Her day-spouse clomb returning o'er the hill.

XL.

And like that uninterpretable wonder,
Which o'er the last Assyrian revel came ;
When the swift-hurrying tempest tore asunder
With demon grasp her elemental frame ;—
He mark'd the lightning—elder twin to thunder
Write on the cloud its characters of flame ;
Till, like the Mede's fierce war-cry following after,
Echoed the younger-born's applauding laughter.

XLI.

Oh wherefore is it that the spirit turns,
E'en in its happiest mood, to gaze on high ?
Snatch'd from that home of old, perchance it yearns
Once more to join its fountain in the sky.
Here sepulchred in clay, it quickly learns
To hate the earthy clods that o'er it lie,
And heav'nward thus in fancied freedom springs,
Or ever death has furnish'd it with wings :—

XLII.

Then falls again to earth, as to her nest
The wearied lark more sweetly sinks at night,
Than when at morn joy-wafted from its breast,
She hymn'd her matin-carol to the light.
Thus did *he* fold, once more on earth a guest,
His soul-wings trembling from their heav'nly flight ;
Shrouding each birdlike thought within his brain,
Till morn should stir its airy plumes again.

XLIII.

And who may gaze upon this earth of ours
With heart and eye so cold as not to love ?
Who gazing lives not o'er again those hours,
When childhood first its simple chaplet wove ?
In many a dell, the soul's best cherish'd flow'rs,
Mem'ry's young children, cradled in the grove,
Whose fond eyes look from many a lonely spot,
Breathing from each blue orb—"Forget me not."

XLIV.

Nature is as a book, where man may read,
Albeit with hurried gaze, not words, but things,
For like a well which hidden waters feed,
Voiceless within the heart her wisdom springs :
Pure is the new religion, fresh the creed
Which to the soul her green page ever brings ;
Reveal'd to all its holy doctrine lies,
Stamp'd upon earth and writ upon the skies.

XLV.

Yes, she is fair to all—but there is one
For whom she ever wears a greener hue,
Greeting with warmer gaze her minstrel son,
Who 'neath her smile and in her beauty grew ;
Who erst in youth to her deep bosom won,
And passion's first draught from that fountain drew—
The wayward Poet—Nature's youngest child—
Cradled in dreams, and fed by fancies wild !

XLVI.

And Rudel breath'd but poetry—it went
Warm as the life-blood thro' each swelling vein,
The ichor of the soul, which circling lent
Love to the heart and lustre to the brain ;
Till from the lip, by these made eloquent,
Its sweet o'erflowing fell like summer rain,
And like those streams which distance could not sever,
Music and language twin-born mix'd for ever.

XLVII.

For him deep beauty dwelt upon the hill,
Whose sunny brow look'd o'er his native valleys ;
There was sweet music in the mountain rill
Ever blue-rushing from its rocky chalice ;
And aye his spirit felt the fresh'ning thrill
Of that pure air, arch'd o'er him like a palace,
From whose high portal, floating down, the breeze
Walk'd o'er the land and wanton'd on the seas—

XLVIII.

Who from the shroudèd mountain's Isiac brow
Teareth the mist-veil in its eddying whirl,
Or onward floating thro' the forest-bough,
Dowers the grass beneath with many a pearl,
Rifling the Dryad's jewell'd hair—and now
Borne on the wild sea-billows as they curl,
Joyously spreads each wing, whose eagle sweep
Rings like a spirit's laughter o'er the deep.

XLIX.

Is not the soul like thee, thou spirit wind,
Born up on high, yet journeying below ?
Like thee, a wayward pilgrim, who shall find
Whence it hath come or whither it doth go ?
Like thee, lone voyager ! what hand shall bind
Its airy wings impalpable, or shew,
Far in the depth of yon eternal dome,
Its promis'd goal, its birth-place and its home ?

L.

Nay it is more than thou—its ev'ry flight
Is bolder, stronger, prouder, than thine own—
A fairer pilgrimage—a path more bright,
Than that o'er which thy spirit-wing hath flown :
Far, far, above thee in yon airless height,
It sits companion'd by the stars alone ;
With them it looks on Heav'n's unveiled brow ;
Away !—the soul is mightier than thou !

LI.

It sinks beneath the ocean's azure breast,
It soars beyond the palace of the star,
It wakes the fire-wing'd lightning from its nest,
And tracks the truant comet from afar !
The cloud, the rainbow's tear-enwoven vest,
All things in earth and sky that lovely are,
Mix with the gazer's heart, and deep infuse
Thro' the glad soul the glory of their hues.

LII.

And such was thine, Rudel !—it travell'd o'er
The realm of space, and peopled as it went
With its own bright creations the far shore,
Soul-fashion'd in that fairy element :
Thy genius knelt unconscious to adore
Visions whose loveliness itself had lent,
As oft of yore the pagan sculptor pray'd
To the cold marble which himself had made.

LIII.

The worship of the beautiful—where'er
Its visible incarnation seem'd to be,
In woman's cheek seraphically fair,
In rushing streamlet and leaf-clothèd tree,
In fleecy cloud soft-slumbering in air,
In hues of light sun-pictur'd on the sea,
In all one glorious spirit shone around,
Making the world for thee one spot of fairy ground.

LIV.

And thus to dream is Poetry—what tho'
Language be all inadequate to seize
Captive the subtle thought, and o'er it throw
Its soul-wrought chain of linkèd harmonies ?
Yet still the godlike feeling sleeps below,
Call'd into life by visions such as these ;
And like the flame deep pent in \mathbb{A} Etna's breast,
Perchance more brightly burns, because repress'd.

LV.

Yet 'tis a curse, a torture, to conceal
Sweet thoughts, like flowers, budding in the brain,
Which fade and die before we can reveal
To others their brief beauty born in vain.
And still methinks 'twere better not to feel
Than buy such short-liv'd pleasure with such pain,
For to the poet words are a relief,
Like tears to uncommunicable grief.

LVI.

His heart is like a wine-cup overflowing,
Whose depth by Nature's luxury is fill'd ;
Her's is the vintage in its chalice glowing,
By Fancy's wondrous alchymy distill'd ;
A dreamy dim intoxication throwing
Over the poet's brain, where she doth build
Her wine-press, winning from each lovely shape
Sweet thoughts, as men crush splendour from the grape.

LVII.

He loveth all those fair and speechless things
Which evermore around him move or grow,
From the gay insect with illumin'd wings,
Steep'd in the golden sunset's summer glow,
To the home-loving flow'r who alway springs
Bright from her wonted couch his feet below,
Which he from her still fondly turns aside,
Fearing the God who therein doth abide.

LVIII.

Nature with him so lovingly doth plead,
That e'en unlovely shapes he loveth well ;
His heart, which joyeth in the gallant steed
Who bears his lord amid the battle swell,
With arch'd neck thunder-cloth'd, and hoof of speed,
Scorns not the worm who listlessly doth dwell
Beneath the clay—a miner who hath found,
Like some rich ore, contentment under ground.

LIX.

Alas ! for war, that it should ever wake

From inner Hell, to trample on the earth !

Alas ! that hatred should its dwelling make

In breasts where gentle pity once had birth !

Ah ! why its thirst should valour stoop to slake

At bloody fountains ?—there is no such dearth

Around us of hereditary woe,

That we should call a new one from below.

LX.

How oft the foot which pitying turn'd aside,

Fearing the truant worm or flow'r to crush,

In war's unhallow'd vineyard hath been dyed

Deep in the trampled bosom's crimson gush

Of fellow-men ! Ah me ! that impious pride

Should urge her frenzied worshippers to rush

Like demons o'er the life-deserted clay,

Proud of the poor prerogative—to slay !

LXI.

It is a priceless birthright to be strong
If guiding Justice wait upon the blow,
To aid the meek of heart who suffer wrong,
And stanch the tears of undeservèd woe ;
To break th' oppressor's chain, whose iron long
Hath eaten to the heart ;—a shield to throw
Over the wounded, and to succour those
Who fight despairing, over-match'd by foes.

LXII.

To help the widow and the fatherless³
When tyranny has snatch'd their rights away ;
To aid the cause of beauty in distress,
When force would bind or villainy betray ;
To temper stern resolve with gentleness,
Prompt to command, yet prouder to obey ;
In virtue's quarrel still to do or die,
Such was thy praise, fierce-smiling Chivalry.

LXIII.

Sweet daughter of an unrelenting sire,
Hate with young mercy born to reconcile,
Inheriting thy father's glance of fire,
Yet scorning not to wear thy mother's smile,—
Blest was the age which saw thee first aspire
In beauty, war's worst frenzy to beguile ;
And blest the clime beneath which thou didst yield
Thy flow'r, blood-nurtur'd on the battle-field.

LXIV.

And Rudel now must leave his heav'nly dream
To join the fierce realities of earth,
Love and all vain delights he now must deem,
Unbought by toil and danger, nothing worth :
War is the element which doth beseem
One of high lineage, for lofty birth
Destines its own as surely to the fray
As instinct goads the lion-whelp to slay.

LXV.

Danger must be his comrade now, and death
At bloody feasts be courted like a bride,
Woo'd but not won; and when he slumbereth,
She, like a pale night-watcher at his side,
With charnel-lighted eyes and earthy breath,
Must hover round his couch, until the pride
Of Chivalry shall teach his eye to dwell
On her wan face as if he lov'd it well.

LXVI.

The lance must shiver on his mailèd breast,
Yet wake within no terror by its shock ;
The sword must leap unheeded from his crest,
As leaps the levin backward from the rock :
At war's red banquet if he be a guest,
Strife should be mirth, and blows a pleasant mock ;
And in its wine, with draughts as deep as theirs,
See that he pledge those courteous wassailers !

LXVII.

So he hath mounted on his Arab steed,
And wander'd forth from that ancestral hall,
A youthful warrior proud of martial weed,
And joying in the graceful plumes that fall
Like snow-flakes o'er his helm: some knightly deed
Wrought in the field before the eyes of all,
Must yet be perill'd e'er his barb may feel
The spur of knighthood on his rider's heel.

LXVIII.

With him in sweet companionship did ride
A youthful page, who lov'd his master well;
One who had sworn to wander by his side
Thro' weal or woe, whatever him befel,
To be with him on earth—and if he died,
In death to follow, still unchangeable.
A part of that he lov'd himself had grown,
Till it had been no life to live alone.

LXIX.

With an affection calm yet passionate,
Like the hush'd ocean eloquently still,
His soul on that beloved one would wait,
And frame voice, look, and gesture to his will.
That twain so dear should ever separate
Had never cross'd his brain—for good or ill
He was Rudel's; two bodies with one heart
Their blood had mingled—could it flow apart ?

LXX.

The stream may part, yet all unsadden'd still
The sever'd waters rush more swiftly on:
Fair hands may gather flowers and not kill
With that sweet theft the stalk they grew upon.
The widow'd oak may live, tho' nothing will
Give back his ivy bride; true love alone
Stays not in life to sorrow o'er the dead,
But fades like flame with that on which it fed.

LXXI.

Slung at his back the minstrel-harp he bore,
Which oft Rudel instinctively would seize,
When, comrades of the sun, their journey o'er,
They couch'd beneath the leafy canopies
Of over-arching forest boughs, and pour
Upon the strings his spirit, like the breeze
Who flits at eve, more lovingly to fan
With airy wing its harp Æolian.

VESPER HYMN TO THE VIRGIN.

1.

When twilight gathers in the west,
And weary trav'lers love to rest,
And one pale star alone is seen
Thro' the forest cloister green—
Ave Maria !
Be with the pilgrim then !

2.

When the fierce battle has died away,
And the soft moon sheddeth her silver ray ;
When friend and foe alike are fled,
And the dying are left alone with the dead—

Ave Maria !

Comfort the warrior then !

3.

When at eve along the dell
Faintly ebbs the vesper bell,
And the minstrel on his knee
Breathes a silent pray'r to thee—

Ave Maria !

Be with thy servant then !

4.

When the wind at eve is still,
And echo sleeps beside the hill,
And nought is heard among the boughs
But the whisper sweet of lovers' vows—

Ave Maria !

Smile on thy children then !

5.

Ave Maria ! by land or deep,
In weary vigil or welcome sleep ;
In grief and joy, in hope and fear,
Mother ! look down on thy children here !

Ave Maria !

LXXII.

Mark how each tone, as if the pow'r of love
Had gifted it with wings to mount on high,
Impatient, like the home-returning dove,
Leaps from its prison wire in ecstacy,
And led by holy instinct soars above,
Prompt to perform its mission in the sky ;
So sweetly bosom'd on the tranquil air,
Hovers the gush of that ascending pray'r :

LXXIII.

Till silence, like a frighted bird returning,
Settles down softly on the forest leaves ;
Above, half seen the golden stars are burning,
Those myriad lamps hung out on festal eves
In Ether's dome—Rudel's deep heart is yearning
Beneath their orbèd multitude, and weaves
A chain of melody by which he dares,
Love-taught, to link his spirit unto theirs.

SONG

TO THE EVENING STAR.

1.

On a rock overhanging the edge of the billow,
A heart-broken minstrel was seated at eve ;
He sought not for rest on that desolate pillow—
Content seeketh slumber—he came but to grieve !

2.

Like young children hush'd on the breast of their mother,
The calm ocean ripples were gather'd in sleep ;
Such quiet might wake in the breast of another
A joy like its own—yet he gaz'd but to weep.

3.

He look'd to the west, where the sunset was streaming
In one line of lustre right over the sea ;
“ Oh thus,” cried the minstrel, “ Hope ever is seeming
In front, yet approach it, it ceases to be.”

4.

The last ray had fled, and the minstrel forlorn
Look'd down once again on the face of the deep ;
Come rest thee, it said, in my bosom, O mourner,
'Twill cradle both thee and thy sorrow to sleep.

5.

For why should man live without any to love him ?
When no one will grieve, is it early to die ?
He look'd up to Heav'n, where softly above him
One lone star look'd down from its home in the sky.

6.

Like a woman's soft eye by affection made tender,
Oh die not, I love thee ! it seemèd to say ;
The youth gaz'd awhile, for he felt in its splendour
One half of his anguish had melted away.

7.

He rose up in hope, where he sat down in sorrow,
“ And bless thee, sweet star, for thy warning,” he cried;
“ To-day may be darkling, but haply to-morrow
“ My sword may win honour, my song gain a bride.”

8.

The sword and the song of the minstrel soon bought him
The smiles of the fair and the voice of the great;
And she was his bride who in beauty had taught him
That Love’s not the vassal, but victor of Fate!

LXXIV.

The song was o'er, but still the minstrel's look,
Upturn'd, was fondly fix'd upon the sky ;
Perchance in that bright planet, as a book,
He read the secret of his destiny ;
For as he gaz'd, a dark cloud came, and shook
Its hair like midnight o'er it : with a sigh
He turn'd him to his harp, but all in vain—
Its spirit slept, and would not wake again.

LXXV.

For vainly preluding, his finger tried
The wonted music of its chords to wake ;
The song which erst gush'd like a mountain-tide,
Now slept, dark, still, and stagnant as a lake,
Deep in his bosom.—“ Be it thine,” he cried,
“ With thy sweet liquid tones the spell to break ;
“ The sullen harp, good Leon, hath forgot
“ Its master's voice to-night, but thou hast not.”

LXXVI.

And Leon smil'd, but answer'd not, and threw
The fair locks backward from his forehead white,
And gazing upward with an eye whose blue
Mirror'd the clear profundity of night,
Look'd on the sky awhile, as if he drew
Deep inspiration thence—quickly the light
Shot to his brain, and thus he 'gan to sing,
Like Jesse's son before the phantom-haunted king.

LEON'S SONG.

UNDINE.

1.

Oh dark is the spell which has bound her to sleep,
A daughter of earth, in a home of the deep ;
Yet bright is the cavern, o'er-arch'd by the green
Of the billow, where sleepeth the Ladie Undine.

2.

Long ages ago a fair maiden was she,
Who grew like a flower beside the deep sea,
Till the water-sprite saw her, and snatch'd her to dwell
Below, like a pearl in its palace of shell.

3.

Oh cold is the beauty and chill is the light
In the passionless eyes of the pale ocean-sprite;
And his voice, like the music of sleep, never stirs
With its echo, the lip which he bendeth to hers.

4.

His thick-falling hair, like the brown ocean weed,
Hung down, yet the lovely one nothing did heed ;
And not one poor kiss could the water-sprite glean
From the ripe ruddy lip of the Ladie Undine.

5.

So in that lone cavern he lull'd her to sleep,
And barr'd up its gate with the bolt of the deep ;
And swore that a slumber unwaking should dim
The eye that had scornfully frown'd upon him.

6.

Bright shapes are around her, and all the day long
Her grotto is rife with the Mermaiden's song ;
But the water-sprite comes like a vision to lean,
All night, o'er the couch of the Ladye Undine.

7.

That spell, says the legend, no longer shall be,
When the brave meets the beautiful under the sea ;
Yet seek not the trial, it warningly saith,
For if love is the guerdon, the forfeit is death.

8.

But fond youth is fearless, and many have tried
To win the fair maid of the sea for their bride ;
Many sought, many seek her, but no one has seen
A lover return from the Ladye Undine.

LXXVII.

He paus'd, and echoless the ling'ring tone,
Drown'd in the night's deep silence, died away
Fainter and fainter ; now its soul hath flown
Into the past's dark sepulchre, and they,
As feasters on a sudden left alone
By some lov'd guest who can no longer stay,
Hold in their breath awhile, hoping in vain
To catch his parting footstep, once again.

LXXVIII.

So they kept silence for a space, and soon
Came slumber softly o'er them, haply caught
From the soft eyelids of the sleepy moon,
Now gleaming 'mid the branches. Sense and thought
Were fetter'd in their dwelling, and that boon
Of the blest night, oblivion, inly wrought
A shroud for mem'ry, in the brain who lay,
Like Ægypt's dead, undestin'd to decay.

LXXIX.

Morn comes with rosy lip, and greeting tender,
To kiss the tear-drop from the flower's cheek ;
Touching the hill-top with its hues of splendour,
Flushing the cloud with many a crimson streak ;
Bidding the stream its incense heav'nward render,
Waking the lark its wonted shrine to seek,
Summoning all earth's creatures by her breath
To start from slumber's temporary death.

LXXX.

Soft as a dream of beauty, daylight crept
 Into the eyelids of that youthful pair,
Till Leon on a sudden, as he slept,
 Felt the wind stirring in his lifted hair,
And from his heather couch in silence leapt
 To wake his lord, Rudel. The soldier's pray'r,
The soldier's meal despatch'd, in order they
 Held to the warrior-camp their onward way.

LXXXI.

My song is not of war ; I may not tell
 Each knightly deed of chivalrous emprise ;
On Love's sweet dangers be it mine to dwell,
 And that soft sorrow born of Ladys' eyes ;
For e'en when bound together by its spell,
 Heart unto heart convulsively replies.
Doth not a shadow oft of transient sadness
 Sully the bright perfection of its gladness ?

LXXXII.

We feel that love is powerless to make
On earth, its home eternal in the breast ;
We feel its insufficiency to slake
The burning thirst within—too deeply blest
Not to be sorrowful ; we fain would take
The very soul of her we love, a guest
Into our craving bosoms : but the chain
Seems only bound on earth to break again.

LXXXIII.

My tale is not of war ; the brave and young
In their own hearts may read how there Rudel
Sham'd not the sword which he so oft had sung
While yet 'twas bloodless : in the battle swell
His was the lance which ever sharpest rung,
His was the steel which ever deadliest fell
Upon the foeman's crest.—Ah me ! that man
Should thus continue what the fiend began !

LXXXIV.

Now from the toil and tumult of the fray,
Turn we again unto our wonted theme
Of love's soft link and passion's wilder sway,
And death deep-hid beneath a youthful dream ;
Well has the minstrel warrior to day
Bath'd his young heart in battle's gory stream ;
The helm hath done its office—beauty now
Must weave a softer chaplet for his brow.

LXXXV.

For peace is come again—from Heav'n descending,
Flinging to ev'ry wind her tresses free,
Bright'ning earth's bosom with her feet, and lending
From her calm eyes a lustre to the sea.
Once more beneath the sun her soul is blending
Itself with Nature's children : herb and tree
Awake in beauty, and the bloodless stream
Is only crimson'd by the morning beam.

CANTO II.

I.

IT was a regal banquet :—the soft air,
Drunk with the liquid sweetness of the lute,
Fann'd many a cheek as round and ripely fair
As was the life-tree's once forbidden fruit :
Wit's meteor flash and wisdom's torch were there,
And Love's stol'n glance, all eloquently mute ;
Rank, talent, beauty, valour, all that be
Fit mates to share a monarch's revelrie !

II.

Studded like heav'n's own vault, the gilded dome,
From myriad lamps its lustre showering,
Seem'd like a crystal palace, by the gnome
Fashion'd in deep earth for its elfin king ;
Or like the blue roof of the sea-maid's home,
O'er which the stars their floating sparkles fling,
So softly, sweetly, mingled to the sight,
Stole its mild ray voluptuously bright.

III.

And over-head in many a gay festoon
Hung flowers fresh-pluck'd of every scent and hue,
Fair as those buds which, blasted all too soon,
'Mid the green paths of happy Eden grew ;
The pale-eyed lily, priestess of the moon,
The vi'let dyed in midnight's deepest blue,
Nyctanthes, waking when the day is done,
And that warm rose who worshippeth the sun.

IV.

There like a Naiad lured from out the tide,

Still for its home the river-lily wept;

There smil'd the orange blossom, like a bride

In whose glad heart a golden promise slept;

And there the hyacinth, for him who died

Still on its leaf the word of mourning kept,

Doom'd, since from death its second life began,

Ever to bear a sympathy with man.⁹

V.

Flowers are holy things—the poet ever

Proud to his kind hath bent the knee to them,

And often, when his hand hath dared to sever

One of those heav'ly children from its stem

His soul hath wept to think that it could never

Back to the casket give life's stolen gem,

Weeping that love which prompted him to seize,

As o'er dead Hylas wept the Naiades.

VI.

Cradled in sorrow's bosom, even thou,
White-vested snow-drop, winter's orphan child,
Hast from thy dying mother's pallid brow
Caught the last light which there so coldly smiled ;
And with a holy love I mark thee now
Rearing thy virgin forehead undefil'd :
A dove-like herald sent, when all is dark
On the cold earth, from Nature's flowery ark.

VII.

The constant wall-flower, who loves to dwell,
Mate of the owl, in many a mossy cleft ;
The lichen hermit of the rock, whose cell
For a bright yet briefer dwelling has been left ;
The golden cowslip, who with fairy bell
Rings in the wild-bee to his wontèd theft,
And, half-concealed, the daisy too was there,
Star of the earth, who shineth ev'ry where.

VIII.

Flash'd from dark locks, like starry night, the braid
Of ocean pearl and earth-recover'd gem ;
And blossoms born in beauty but to fade,
Wreath'd o'er young brows their kindred diadem.
What tho' the tyrant Time's encroaching shade
On others fall ?—it falleth not on them !
Laugh on while blood is warm and eyes are bright,
Death comes to-morrow, then be gay to night.

IX.

Aye, kiss the wine-cup while its rosy draught
Sparkles so gladly in that home of gold ;
Like it life's fleeting goblet should be quaff'd
Ere yet its juice sinks spiritless and cold.
Then drain it now—its wine hath ever laugh'd
Bright for the young, but flows not for the old ;
Dull age may drain the bitter dregs, but thou
Hold'st the o'erflowing cup—then drain it now.

X.

And it was drain'd : wine, mirth, and minstrel song,

With love's low whisper and wit's thrilling word ;

All joys that to fair pleasure's train belong—

All hopes by which the heart is inly stirr'd—

Circled around that fair and courtly throng :

Warm passion breath'd the vow that beauty heard,

And many a head was bent to hide the blush

Whose crimson own'd the bosom's inward gush.

XI.

There sate the young Rudel—his soul's deep thirst

As deeply slak'd in pleasure's nectar'd stream ;

Each thought of bliss which memory had nurs'd,

Snatch'd from the wildness of his youthful dream ;

Each shape of beauty (save the one which erst

Witch'd his young spirit with its shadowy beam) ;

All that warm hope had imag'd bright and fair—

Or waking Fancy worshipp'd—centred there.

XII.

Of old he knelt unto the star—but now
Eyes flash around to which their light is dim.
The virgin moon—alas ! young Beauty's brow
Bareth a lustre far more bright to him.
The new-born fount ! the dew-drop on the bough !
Away !—be mine yon goblet's reeking brim !
Wine—woman—song— for ever should fill up
The crystal depth of life's enchanted cup.

XIII.

Bring ye the harp !—hark ! instant at the call
Deep silence gathers o'er the festal ring,
To list the liquid melodies that fall
Like drops of sound from his o'erflowing string.
Mark how o'er fretted roof and banner'd wall
The first faint fleeting prelude seems to cling ;
Soft as the cry which on creation's morn
Broke from the lip of Music newly-born.

SONG.

1.

Unto what fountain fliest thou thy sunny wings to dip,
Oh spirit mine! the sparkling wine or woman's warmer lip?
What chaplet shall I gather thee as thou wanderest along,
The laurel wreath that springs from death, or the rose
that's born of song?

2.

Bright thro' the bosom of the wine a ruby light is thrown,
But woman's eye, itself a sky, hath a sunlight of its own;
Thy lip can only kiss the cup its crimson light to kill,
But beauty's cheek thy lip may seek, and leave it redder still.

3.

The laurel is a noble tree, its leaves are red with gore,
But heav'n had drest the rose's breast in beauty long before;
On valour's brow let glory bind the garland that she owes,
But who would wear the laurel there, unmixed with the
rose?

4.

Oh spirit, let me counsel thee—the wine is ruby bright,
But love shall pour thy feet before a more enduring light;
For when beneath the frown of time it seemeth to depart,
It shall but fly from the lov'd one's eye, to settle in her heart.

5.

And spirit! if thy fatherland have need of all her men,
Among the free let thy sword be the foremost, fiercest, then;
Then, then thy steel from danger's trunk shall hew the
laurel bough,
But the sweet rose-bud undimm'd by blood, take for thy
garland now.

XIV.

He ceas'd—sweet voices answer'd, “ Be it ours
With its own chosen bud thy song to greet.”
He knelt, and roses instantly in showers,
Flung by fair hands, fell lightly at his feet.
And, “ Thus it is,” they cried, “ that Beauty dowers
The soul of him who deemeth her more sweet
Than aught but fame.” He answer'd not, but press'd
Full oft the gather'd roses to his breast.

XV.

Like the faint crimson of the eastern sky,
When from its couch the dawn is newly woke,
From the pale cheek, curv'd lip, and flashing eye
Of that young bard the minstrel triumph broke;
It was the inward flame, untaught to die,
Which from its mortal cell one moment broke.
But hark ! he sings again—be silent ! hush—
His thoughts to love, like streams to ocean, rush.

SONG.

1.

Whom call ye the child of song ?
Is it he whose heart is cold,
Who bartereth the fiery breath
Of minstrelsy for gold ?

2.

Whom call ye the child of song ?
Is it he who never pour'd
At Beauty's feet a prayer meet
For the one whom he ador'd ?

3.

Whom call ye the child of song ?
Is it he who marks the ray
Bright streaming up in the red wine-cup,
And turneth him away ?

4.

Whom call ye the child of song?

Oh, loved one, is it he

Who would not give e'en life to live

One moment bless'd by thee?

5.

No ; he is the child of song

Whose spirit, like the flame

Burning alone on an altar-stone,

Is only fed by fame.

6.

And he is the child of song

Whose spirit floats adown

The crimson flood of the red grape's blood

To drink, but not to drown.

7.

He is the child of song
Who, bound by Beauty's sway,
Kneeleth to her a worshipper
Who never can betray.

8.

He is the child of song
Who, led by Beauty's eye,
Would seek afar its guiding star,
To bless it and to die.

XVI.

He ceas'd—and while each list'ner's head was bow'd,
Tranc'd by the dreamy sweetness of the spell,
A stranger, rising, stepp'd from out the crowd,
An aged man—like one of those who dwell
In deep monastic caverns, or are vow'd
To bear the restless palmer's badge and shell
Over the earth—his deep voice, as he spoke,
On that sweet silence dissonantly broke.

XVII.

And, " Well," he cried, " Sir Minstrel, canst thou wake
The viewless spirit who with folded wing
Sleeps in the silent harp, bidding her shake
Its hoarded sweetness from each honey'd string,
Melting like liquid music-dew, to slake
The ear's unsated thirst—'tis thine to sing,
Thyself embark'd on passion's sea, the star
That lures such loving mariners afar.

XVIII.

“ I too, ere yet the fountain of my blood
Was seal’d for aye by winter’s icy spell,
While youth’s gay blossom still was in the bud,
Could frame an am’rous ditty passing well ;
But now the tree is wither’d, and the flood
Is frozen o’er : yet haply can I tell
To thee who floatest o’er its summer tide,
The one bright isle where Beauty doth abide.

XIX.

“ As one who flieth from the wrath of God,
I’ve wander’d many a year from shrine to shrine ;
The desart’s human dust my feet have trod,
And felt death’s clutch beneath them in the brine :
But pilgrims’ feet should be with patience shod,
And I had vow’d in holy Palestine
Once more to kneel—when voyaging o’er the sea,
Our barque a tempest drove to Tripoli.

XX.

“ And lo a wonder !—all men did unite
In praise of her who was enthronèd there ;
They said that she was borne on wings of light,
Like a stray’d angel from the upper air,
To soften man’s stern bosom by the sight
Of her unearthly beauty—but I wear
Thy patience with my words ; enough that I
Myself beheld this daughter of the sky.

XXI.

“ And so shalt thou !” then pausing for awhile,
Drew from his vest a portrait which he gave
Unto Rudel, and said—“ Behold the isle
To which thy barque must bear thee o’er the wave ;
This is the young Lucinde, and her’s the smile
Which is thy star if thou art beauty’s slave.”
The minstrel gaz’d—O happiness ! ’twas she,
That fair dream-haunter worshipp’d secretly.

XXII.

It was the same:—there were the angel eyes
Which had so often o'er his slumber shone;
There was the mouth from which unreal sighs
Had seem'd to steal in answer to his own,
Till, like a watcher, to her native skies
Back on the wings of morning she had flown:
But now he slumber'd not, and she was there,
Cold, voiceless, still—but oh how very fair!

XXIII.

She stood beneath an eastern colonnade,
Where lavish gold was interwrought with stone;
And fountains, ever falling thro' the shade,
Swept from their wat'ry harps a silver tone.
And she, most like a spirit who had stray'd
From one of those sweet fountains, stood alone—
Free for a time, but spell-bound when 'twas o'er
To melt into faint music as before.

XXIV.

Her raven hair, whose ringlets dark and deep
Lay like the vine's ripe cluster o'er her brow,
Thence like a troubled fountain seem'd to leap,
Wild o'er her shoulder's half o'erwhelmèd snow ;
And on dark-gushing in its downward sweep,
Bath'd in that ample flood her breast below ;
Like Eve's first garment ere the eye of sin
Had dared to glance her garden-home within.

XXV.

Above, like some frail guardian of the fair,
Shone bright the silver band which should have kept
Back the soft masses of that silken hair
Within their prison-house ; but they had crept
Like idle truants out, and every where
Wander'd unheeded while their keeper slept.
Oh had that charge been mine, thou senseless braid,
Not one of all those bright ones should have stray'd.

XXVI.

Seen thro' the whiteness of her slender throat,
Wander'd the deep vein delicately blue,
So beautifully clear that you might note
The warm blood ever redly rushing thro';
And mournfully the soft eye seem'd to float
Bath'd in the lustre of its inborn dew;
Till love would almost raise its hand to dash
The tear that trembled on each silken lash.

XXVII.

Her brow, the marble sanctuary of thought,
Calm like a statue's, breath'd but of repose;
Her virgin cheek was pale, but still had caught
One lurking shade of crimson from the rose;
Her lips, twin-blushing sisters, ever sought
To hide the treasur'd pearls o'er which they close,
Building in that sweet prison-house a cell
In which the soul of smiles was wont to dwell.

XXVIII.

One arm was rais'd, perchance to throw aside
From those unearthly eyes the silken tress,
Whose curtain half-concealing could not hide
Of each blue orb the inner loveliness—
Soft as, by storms o'ershadow'd, Hesper's bride
Looks down thro' all to brighten and to bless ;
Or, struggling thro' the forest's roof of green,
The star more lovely deem'd because but dimly seen.

XXIX.

With graceful curve its sister limb was bending
O'er a small lute which check'd its downward fall ;
Each chord unconsciously itself was blending
With that white hand symmetrically small,
As ever and anon, a new life lending,
Her jewell'd wrist swept o'er them one and all,
E'en as the wind wakes music from the sea,
Yet listeth not its own deep melody.

XXX.

Woven as if of light, a slender zone
With graceful cincture clung around her waist ;
Below, the loose robe negligently thrown,
As if to show the beauty it embrac'd,
Gave to the eye one fairy foot which shone
Pure as the printless marble where 'twas placed ;
And o'er it one white ankle from its shroud
Look'd like the moon new-waken'd from a cloud.

XXXI.

And well, full well, the omnipresent mind
Around each charm the limner's hand had wrought,
And with that lifeless portraiture entwin'd
The deeper-drawn vitality of thought.
In cheek, and eye, and brow it lay enshrin'd,
Pure as the flame which erst Prometheus brought—
A vestal torch, lighting with heav'nly ray
The perishable temple where it lay.

XXXII.

Such was the young Lucinde, as fair a form
As ever painting mirror'd by its spell;
Life on the dewy lip seem'd redly warm,—
Life stirr'd within the bosom's breathing swell.
Away, fond gazer!—hence! ere yet the storm
Of passion overtake thee; hence, Rudel!
Remember him who, wooing all the day,
A wave-born shadow wept himself away.

XXXIII.

Bethink thee of the many a tale of woe,
Which from love's luscious poison-cup has sprung,
Of youth and beauty by her spell laid low,
For aye she seeks the lovely and the young.
It is a cherish'd frenzy, which doth grow
Deep in the brain, by many a minstrel sung;
An inward flame, consuming blood and breath;
A dream, whose dark interpreter is death.

XXXIV.

Bethink thee of the many a broken heart
Whose love-born sorrow slept but in the grave ;
Albeit a warrior, deem not that thou art
Too proud, too strong, too cold to be its slave.
Sharper than Paynim spear, love's viewless dart
Subdues the strong and striketh down the brave.
E'en now the bow is bent, the arrow shot,
A wound is thine which yet thou feelest not.

XXXV.

Breathless he stood, as if each meaner sense
Were all concentrated in that stedfast gaze ;
One burning thrill, for pleasure too intense,
For pain too blissful, o'er his spirit plays.
His eyes were dazzled, yet he knew not whence
Came the fierce splendour : mark with what amaze,
One who has mourn'd in blindness from his birth,
Looks for the first time o'er the lovely earth.

XXXVI.

Or like some favour'd voyager, whose ken
Lights on a fair and new-discover'd isle;
A wilderness untenanted by men,
Where nought save Nature's universal smile
Hath ever dwelt; how rapturously then
His keen eye flashes with delight, the while
It takes in all the beauty of the place:
Thus gazed Rudel upon Lucinda's face.

XXXVII.

Or like the lustre of some bashful star,
When first the rapt Chaldean's eager view
Caught the first glimmer of its distant car
Emerging from th' unfathomable blue.
Deem'd he not that small sojourner afar
Of all the loveliest—because 'twas new?
Thus Rudel sought with still unsated eye
This constellation born in beauty's sky.

XXXVIII.

Yet soon, alas ! one agonizing thought,
Like to a tempest-cloud by mem'ry sent,
Came o'er the horizon of his dream, and brought
Darkness o'er its ideal firmament.
“ Sweet haunter of my dreams, so often sought,
And only thus at last in mock'ry sent,
Have I at length thus found thee all divine,—
Found thee to know thou never canst be mine !

XXXIX.

“ Shall I but gaze upon thine eyes of blue,
E'en while another suns him in their smile ?
Shall I dream o'er thy lips' untasted dew,
That some more favour'd guest may drink the while ?
Fool ! wouldest thou love, but let another woo ?
Thine is the barque, and this is beauty's isle—
Said not the old man so ?—Come, let us fly
Together !—Leon, haste !—ah, where am I ?”

XL.

He gazed around in wonder, for the space
Whereon but now he mark'd the palmer stand
Was void, and of his presence not a trace
Was left, save that lov'd portrait in his hand.
There—nought was chang'd ; still the soul-haunting face
Met his, and streaming from its silver band,
Still gush'd the dark locks downward like a river ;
There tarried yet the gift, but where the giver ?

XLI.

E'en from before their eyes he seem'd to fade,
Yet pass'd he thence not borne on mortal limb,
But only ceas'd to be, as doth a shade
When the frail light that fashion'd it grows dim.
Some spake of sorcerers, and men that made
Spirits their slaves, for such they deem'd him ;
And some more fearful whisper'd, " that the fiend
Himself had left that portrait of Lucinde."

XLII.

They spoke, but Rudel answer'd not a word,

Standing like one fresh-smitten of despair;

Albeit his lip unconsciously was stirr'd,

As by the breathing of an inward pray'r.

He knew not what they said—he only heard

The palmer's parting voice; his frame was there,

But his swift soul, already o'er the sea,

Had fled, Lucinde! thou lovely one, to thee!

XLIII.

A gentle hand touch'd his—he turn'd, and lo!

Leon's soft eyes look'd up into his own,

And on his darken'd sense distinctly slow,

Stole like a ray the well-remember'd tone.

“ Dear master!”—Rudel answer'd, “ let us go,

Methinks the air around is heavy grown,

As if e'en now a crowd of fiendish things

Were brooding o'er us with their outstretch'd wings.”

XLIV.

Then turning to the guests, he cried, “ Farewell!
In kindness part we as in mirth we met;
I would not have for me one bosom swell
With grief, or one soul-worshipp'd eye be wet.
With you on earth no longer I may dwell;
But tho' forgotten, ne'er will I forget,
E'en while I bid to life itself adieu,
The dearer bond that bound me unto you.

XLV.

“ For hear me vow, with minstrel harp in hand,
Hymning the fair Lucinde, afar to roam,
To seek with weary foot the distant land
Where heav'n hath found once more on earth a home.
Then welcome, heaving wave or arid sand,
The desart's dread siroc, the ocean foam;
And welcome death itself, if that mine eye
May drink but once her beauty ere it die.

XLVI.

“ We part, but not for ever ; there is kept

For all a home beyond the pathless air,

And love, which only with existence slept

On this cold earth, shall re-awaken there.

There joy shall wipe the tear from eyes that wept,

And ev’ry limb love’s flowery link shall wear,

Whose chain shall re-unite—no more to sever ;

Then farewell to ye all, farewell !—but not for ever.”

XLVII.

He spake and turn’d to go : then all replied,

“ Farewell to thee, thou courteous knight and true ;

If thou dost wander hence to seek a bride,

Well may’st thou speed and not unwelcom’d woo.

If thou with us no longer may’st abide,

Some tears at least shall grace our last adieu :

Tears not by present sorrow taught to flow,

But by the green vine shed in gladness long ago.

XLVIII.

“ Drink, minstrel, drink ! for lo ! the ruddy wine
Burns like thy spirit eloquently bright ;
Drink, warrior, drink ! for oft those veins of thine
Have yielded up *their* vintage in the fight.
Pilgrim of love ! thy first gift at its shrine
Shall be a deep libation ; and the light
Shed from its stream oracular shall teach
Thy soul the inmost altar-stone to reach.”

XLIX.

The cup is drain’d, and like a dying tone
Of his own harp the minstrel youth is fled,
Never to be recall’d—but not alone,
For on his ear young Leon’s fairy tread
Fell like a soften’d echo of his own.
Then turn’d Rudel all suddenly and said,
“ Alas ! poor Leon—true—I had forgot—
Fate calls not thee to share mine alter’d lot.

L.

“ To part is anguish, but to go were death—
Stay then, sweet blossom, on thy parent bough,
Where the soft wind at even wandereth
To keep thee bright and beautiful as now.
I seek another air, whose fiery breath,
Perchance, like flame, may fasten on my brow ;
But mine alone—nay, Leon, dry that tear—
It is my destiny, then tarry here.

LI.

“ And if again”—“ Oh God ! we part not so !”
Broke in the breathless page with sudden cry,
“ Still onward where thou goest I will go,
And when thou diest I myself will die.
Thy bliss hath aye been mine, and if 'tis woe
Which now thou seekest, master, may not I ?
What danger can I dread, since life to me
Hath but one sorrow—not to be with thee.”

LII.

He could no more, for passion, like a storm,
Now melted into rain within his breast ;
And Rudel felt the tear-drops fast and warm
Gush o'er that hand wherein his own was prest.
Fondly he clasp'd the page's slender form,
Yet strove to chide him e'en while he carest,
That those dear eyes should pay affection's debt
With tears ; but while he spoke he felt his own were wet.

LIII.

As a fond mother would her wayward child,
Raising the page's head, he gently flung
The fair locks from his eyes, which weeping smil'd ;
For April-like is sorrow to the young,
Where rain and sun are sweetly reconcil'd ;
Then closer still than ever Leon clung,
Fearing that look might prove the last farewell,
Which his lord's tongue was powerless to tell.

LIV.

“ Fear not, thou shalt not leave me,” Rudel cried,
“ If I to thee am dearer than thy home ;
Still will I take thee, Leon, at my side,
And wheresoe’er I wander, thou shalt roam.
Come, let those streaming eyes of thine be dried,
There’s brine enough in yonder ocean foam,
O’er which our path must lie—be stout of heart,
Come weal come woe, we twain will never part.”

LV.

Soft as the breeze of morning from the bough
Shakes down the pearlèd drops that Even threw,
His kind lip bent o’er Leon’s childish brow,
And from his lids o’erladen kiss’d the dew ;
And they like clouds disburthen’d lifted now,
Shewing beneath the sky’s transparent blue :
Whence, if a rain-drop fell, it was but one,
Steep’d in the smiles of the returning sun.

LVI.

Then on they went together, and no more,
Fair land of Provence ! in thy forests green,
In crowded hall or on the ocean shore
The wand'ring minstrel and his page were seen ;
But whether dark or bright the fate that bore
The pilgrim from his home, who seeks, I ween,
Must wander forth and learn with me to rove
Himself that dreary pilgrimage of love.

END OF CANTO II.

CANTO III.

I.

OH Love ! thy presence in the human breast

Is like the minstrel's finger to the lute,

Rousing its music to a sweet unrest,

Which else had slept unprofitably mute.

Alas ! why shouldst thou like a serpent guest,

Or the foul worm within a flowery shoot—

Sweet Love, why shouldst thou waken but to sting

The too warm heart that nurs'd thee slumbering ?

II.

Oh woman ! heaven-born and from above,
Sent down to earth with beauty for thy dower,
Subduer of the world !—for man's deep love,
Which springeth from thy weakness, is thy power—
Blest was the moment when in Eden's grove
Thy form to life first blossom'd like a flower ;
Such Adam deem'd thee first, till bolder grown,
Kneeling, he clasp'd his beautiful—his own.

III.

Thou who art made so lovely that the bliss
Of gazing turns to torture—should we feel
That o'er that lip another's burning kiss,
Around that form another's arm may steal—
Oh ! life's worst agony is joy to this !
Where we have knelt to see another kneel,
Or e'en to dream—fair being, such deep woe,
Say, could'st thou find above to bring to us below ?

IV.

Thou know'st our hearts are altogether thine,
In life, in death, in gladness, or in care;
Yet tho' we worship thee, so sweet a shrine
Should loathe the tearful homage of despair:
For mercy is the mark of things divine,
And heaven will bend to list the humble prayer,
Teaching thee not to scorn the meanest thing
Who doth his bleeding heart to thee a victim bring.

V.

Loved, beautiful Lucinde ! soul-wedded bride !
Idol ! from earthly passion thron'd apart,
Dear desart blossom, whom I fain would hide,
Far from the gaze of others, in my heart ;
Oh ! scorn me not—tho' love, mine only guide,
Is blind, yet he shall lead me where thou art !
And wilt thou not bestow one smile at last,
Giving a priceless guerdon to the past ?

VI.

Alas ! alas ! I know not—hope and fear
Are strangely mix'd together in my brain ;
Thou art a holy thing whose heav'nly sphere
Seems far too high for one like me to gain ;
But yet a thing withal so deeply dear,
That if despair should bid me deem in vain
Mine utmost service, hope and life would be
Together lost, Lucinde, in losing thee.

VII.

Dark was the gloom, yet beautiful the ray,
Which thus alternate clothed the pilgrim's dream,
As on with foot unwearied day by day,
Love like a star still lured him by its beam.
To her alone at eve he knelt to pray,
For her alone his frenzied brain would teem
With thoughts of adoration which he gave
To the wide-roving wind as to a slave—

VIII.

To carry to Lucinde; and still where'er
He journey'd on, his song was aye the same ;
He made each element, the list'ning air,
The echoing rock familiar with her name ;
Earth heard and ocean answer'd to his prayer,
And the sky chronicled in words of flame
The fond idolatry which dared transfer
The worship due to heaven—unto her.

IX.

For is it not idolatry to vow
Heart, soul, and strength, and passion thus to one ?
Before no other shrine thy knee to bow ?
To see no other shape beneath the sun ?
And in thy heart's lone temple to endow
Her with those secret prayers which should have won
Forgiveness for thyself?—Ah me ! such love,
Tho' bright on earth, has yet no home above !

X.

It is its own avenger : never yet
Hath mortal passion been unmix'd with sorrow ;
True love is like a star in heaven set,
Whose holy light each gazer's heart may borrow.
But should we, therefore, in its light forget
The holier morn that waketh with the morrow ?
Trust not the star, whose unassisted ray
Lends but sufficing light to lead astray.

XI.

True love is like the summer dew, which, born
On earth, yet falls from Heaven on the flower
By night, yet lo ! the chilly lip of morn
Steals but a drop of all its hoarded shower ;
But passion, like the sun, with eyes of scorn,
Gaining in fierceness as he grows in power,
Snatches that treasur'd life, and scorches up
With it the flower's heart which held it like a cup.

XII.

And Rudel knew not that the star, whose light

Thus hover'd o'er his path, to death was leading ;

He deem'd not that the flame, which shone so bright

Within his breast, upon its blood was feeding.

His heart's disease was love—then what could blight

His soul, thus onward to its object speeding ?

He could not dream of dying—death had nought

In common with the creature whom he sought.

XIII.

And day by day a livelier lustre came,

Lending a mournful beauty to his eyes,

Unnaturally bright, as is the flame

Of the spent torch that struggles ere it dies.

Yet neither thought of death : Lucinde ! thy name

Could not be coupled with such dark surmise ;

And Leon felt that *he* had nought to dread :

Death's cheek is aye so pale—his lord's was red.

XIV.

“ On ! on !” was still his cry : “ each step is blest,
Which brings us, loved one ! nearer unto thee ;
And only welcome be the hour of rest,
That aids the weary foot afresh to flee.

The bird that seeks afar a foreign nest,
With tiny wings unwearied spans the sea ;
And shall we faint, young traveller ! when love
With rosy finger beckons from above ?”

XV.

Thus did they wander on, while over land,
By hill, and dale, and plain their journey lay ;
Save that they held the minstrel-harp in hand,
Taking no thought about the coming day.

It is the knightly spear, the warrior brand,
Which from the foe resisting rend their prey ;
But 'tis the harp alone whose voice can woo,
With each unwonted gift, the giver's blessing too.

XVI.

The peasant, when his ear delighted caught
Its sound at eve, oped wide his cottage door,
And to the board, unask'd, all kindly brought
In humble guise his hospitable store.

For thus are some by their own sorrow taught
The ways of mercy—one, who on the floor
Of the thatch'd cabin better loves to be,
Than in the palace home of kings across the sea.

XVII.

And when they came unto some castle gate,
His finger o'er the chords he gently flung,
And as it were a spell that mov'd it, straight
To meet their step the drawbridge downward swung ;
But still in lowly shed or hall of state,
One only song seem'd wedded to his tongue ;
One only name, breath'd like a thing divine—
Lucinde ! why need I say that it was thine ?

XVIII.

But save his own, no eye did e'er behold
The portrait of his love : within his vest,
Hiding it as the miser hides his gold,
With brooding gaze unprofitably blest,
To it as to herself he knelt and told
His bosom's burning thoughts, then madly prest
His fever'd lips to her's, as tho' he felt
The cold yet rosy mouth in answ'ring kisses melt.

XIX.

They gain'd the shore, and Leon from its height
Look'd down and saw the surface of the deep,
With countless smiles immeasurably bright,
Like a young Titan laughing thro' his sleep ;
And, " Where," cried he, " is now thy grasp of might ?
Thy wave by winds unbridled taught to leap ?
Sure thy false chroniclers in tale and song,
Who call'd thee fierce, sweet ocean, did thee wrong."

XX.

“ ‘Twas truth,” said Rudel: “ fierceness slumbers now
In his deep heart, like sorrow in thine own:
Look!—on the mirror of his glassy brow
The image of the Deity is thrown.
Thence shall the fierce storm torture it, and thou,
Sharing its wrath, in this shalt be alone—
That calm full oft shall soothe the ocean’s pain,
But thine once rous’d shall never rest again.”

XXI.

“ Ah me!” replied the youth, “ yet, master, look!
Doth not each sunbeam, tremulously bright,
Seem on the azure brine, as in a book,
Heav’n’s praise in glorious characters to write?
Saw’st thou yon ship, how gallantly she shook
Down from the mast her canvas snowy white
As is the sea-bird’s wing?—see now her sail
Fills with the first faint breathing of the gale!

XXII.

“ And from before her, as she moveth on,
Falls the white foam in many a silver flake ;
She breasts the ocean-waters, as a swan
Breaks the still surface of its parent lake.
See, like sweet memories of joy that’s gone,
Behind the blue wave brightens in her wake.
How beautiful !—Say, master, shall not we
Sail in a barque like this across the sea ?”

XXIII.

Hearing no answer, Leon turn’d him round,
And shriek’d with all the anguish of dismay ;
For there, like one death-stricken, on the ground,
With bloodless cheek, his lord extended lay.
Whether with hope fresh-gushing thought was drown’d
Thus in his brain, it is not mine to say ;
Or if then first the heart’s arrested breath
Felt the close grapple of the coming death.

XXIV.

Yet 'twas not death itself—the fire of thought
Shone out once more rekindled in his brain,
And life, within his heart returning, brought
Breath to the lip and life-blood through the vein;
But yet that interval, it seem'd, had wrought,
Though brief, the work of years.—Despair had lain
Long dark upon his soul, and now its gloom
Was deepen'd by the shadow of the tomb.

XXV.

The curtains of the grave were drawn aside,
Revealing to his thought the earthy bed
Where he, the lover of a living bride,
Was doom'd to make his nuptials with the dead.
E'en now to him th' unliving seem'd allied
By an unhallow'd sympathy; keen dread
Came o'er his spirit: could it, then, be firm?
To leave Lucinde and marry with the worm!

XXVI.

'Twas a sad sight to see him fade away,
The brave, the good, the gifted, and the young ;
Ending too soon, like an unfinish'd lay
When half forgot by him that should have sung.
Oh, Death ! foul epicure, why shouldst thou prey
Thus ever on the heart that would have clung
Most zealously to life, and wander by
With scorn the weary ones who seek to die ?

XXVII.

Now suffer we awhile the twain to go
Over the briny bosom of the sea,
Leaving each day monotonously slow
Unmark'd to come and unrecorded flee.
And haste we onward in our tale of woe,
Making a present of the yet-to-be :
Imagine, then, that many a sun has set,
And o'er the wave their barque is speeding yet.

XXVIII.

'Twas eventide—the sun was sinking slowly
As erst, sweet Cyprus, o'er thine haunted isle ;
Over thine hill, Olympian, once so holy,
Shedding the lustre of his parting smile ;
For tho' its altar burneth not, and lowly
Fall'n is that shrine where Cypris dwelt the while,
Like one last Pagan, lone Apollo still
Haunts at the vesper hour thy sacred hill.

XXIX.

Deep azure dyes alternately with gold
The ocean at thy base, in hue the same
As that which steep'd its waters, when of old
Forth from their breast young Aphrodite came ;
When each warm billow, rushing over bold
To clasp the ocean-child's immortal frame,
Felt that a portion of its light had flown
From beauty's burning bosom to its own.

XXX.

And lo ! a gallant vessel, on whose sail
Sleeps the warm hue of sunset, o'er the sea,
Lur'd by the whisper of the western gale,
Is leaving that sweet island on her lee ;
And now from off the deck her gazers hail
Thy long-sought haven, welcome Tripoli !
Blow freshly still, thou breeze ; and e'er the sun
Dips in yon wave its harbour will be won.

XXXI.

Upon that peopled deck a youth was lying,
Whose fix'd eye sought, forgetful of its pain,
The sun, like one who felt that he was dying,
And ne'er should gaze upon its light again.
Like his own life, the kindred ray is flying
Down to its own brief sepulchre, the main ;
And when to-morrow forth from ocean's brim
The fresh light springs, it will not be for him.

XXXII.

A gentle boy was kneeling at his side,
Whose burning eyes, incapable of tears,
Seem'd all too young to be thus early dried,
But grief perchance had wrought the work of years.
Poor child ! he never spoke, but only tried
To stifle ev'ry sob, like one who fears
To trust his voice in words, lest it should wreak
Its pain on one ungovernable shriek.

XXXIII.

But ever and anon the anguish rose
From his swell'n heart too strong to be repress'd ;
And one deep sob, like water that o'erflows
An o'er-filled urn, fell lab'ring from his breast ;
And now a momentary shudder goes
Quick thro' his frame, where agony, a guest
Like the young Spartan's hidden theft of old,
Gnaws the torn heart too fiercely to be told.

XXXIV.

Then Rudel—for 'twas he—look'd back and said,
“ Hither the harp, good Leon, haste to bring ;
The sun is sinking fast ; but ere 'tis fled,
To it a last farewell I fain would sing.
In after time and oft, when I am dead,
Nurs'd by its grateful smile a flow'r shall spring
Over my grave, in beauty to repay
The dying minstrel's unforgotten lay.”

XXXV.

The harp was brought, and placed before his feet ;
They were like friends whom accident hath parted
In youth, but when in after life they meet,
The one is chill'd, the other broken-hearted ;
And either feels that something which was sweet
In friendship's early day hath now departed ;
Deeming the other chang'd, and wond'ring why
In olden time he lov'd so fervently.

XXXVI.

For first his hand shook, trembling, as it crept
Languidly o'er each unaccustom'd wire ;
Anon it bolder grew, and broadly swept,
As sweeps the wind over its ocean lyre ;
Till from each chord quick-vibrating there leapt,
Fresh kindled by his touch, such tones of fire,
That each unconscious list'ner turn'd him round,
As tho' his ear were burning with the sound.

XXXVII.

Then one and all instinctively they came,
And in a circle round about him stood ;
Stern wayfarers they were—iron of frame—
Strong men, whose speech was rougher than their mood ;
For oft a head was bent, as if in shame,
To hide the blinding tear-drop which bedew'd
The list'ner's eye, while that poor minstrel gave,
Thus, like the swan, his death-song to the wave.

RUDEL'S LAST SONG.

1.

We are brothers in death, oh Sun !
Twin travellers to the grave,
I to the earth who gave me birth,
And thou to the ocean wave.

2.

Yet tarry o'er thy sepulchre
A little space, till I
From thee have won, oh burning one !
The lesson—how to die.

3.

Thy life hath aye been beautiful,
Yet brief in upper air ;
And I am here, a sojourner,
As all my fathers were.

4.

Now as a dying warrior
Sinks on the newly slain ;
Beneath thy head is heaving red
The bosom of the main.

5.

Yet death ends not our brotherhood,
If thou again must shine ;
For me shall dawn a happier morn,
And a holier than thine !

6.

We are brothers in song, oh Sun !
For thou dost in thy flight
Frame for the ear of ev'ry sphere
Thy melodies of light.

7.

We are brothers in love, oh Sun !
For the moon thou lovest best ;
And I like thee all things that be
But one beyond the rest.

8.

And I to thy despair, oh Sun !
A counterpart can find ;
For both below are doom'd to go,
And leave that love behind.

9.

Yet like thy ray returning !
That orbed moon to fill,
Oh ! may I spread, when I am dead,
Round her a halo still.

XXXVIII.

E'en as the last word faded from his lip,
He stretch'd his hand and pointed to the sun,
Which then with rayless orb was seen to dip
Into the ocean-wave, and cried, " 'Tis done!"
Then backward sank.—In that death-freighted ship,
Of those rough mariners there was not one,
Who felt not then his heart with anguish swell,
As forth he sprang to save him, ere he fell.

XXXIX.

But love's fond eye was keener than their own,
And Leon brook'd not that another's care
Should fill his office :—watchful he had thrown
Around Rudel his feeble arms, and there,
As if he deem'd, poor youth, that he alone
In that death sorrow had a right to share,
Repell'd their aid—Leon it was, not they,
To whom belong'd that scarcely breathing clay.

XL.

They who had shar'd not in his hour of mirth,
What right had they to rob him of his grief ?
How could they grieve ? who knew not half the worth
Of him whose life, thus beautifully brief,
Was soon to end for ever : on the earth
They still had home, love, hope, to bring relief ;
Friends still for them upon its surface trod—
Poor Leon had but one, and he—oh God !

XLI.

Did he not dream ? was thus—Meanwhile the barque
Had ever unimpeded held her way,
And even now, ere yet the sky was dark,
Mid' the calm waters of the haven lay.
The shore is almost reach'd, when from it—hark !
A shriek—'tis she ! Awake ! thou senseless clay !
'Tis she ! it is Lucinde !—thou canst not lie
In the cold arms of death, and she so nigh,

XLII.

Pilgrim, the shrine is won—and wilt thou sink
Thus at its very threshold?—ere thy knee
Hath bent in adoration, wilt thou shrink
From the full blaze of that divinity
Which thou did'st come to worship?—On the brink
Of death's abysmal gulph, look back and see
Lucinde, poor fleeting spirit! and from her
Take one last smile to light thy sepulchre..

XLIII.

It was, in truth, Lucinde; the voice of fame
Ere now had wander'd to her bright abode,
And told of one who, guided by the flame
Of her great beauty, on his toilsome road,
With hymns of adoration onward came,
As to a shrine; and hearing it, there glow'd
Within her woman's heart a gentle ruth,
Half love, half pity, for the stranger youth.

XLIV.

And soon, by fancy guided, she had wrought
His portrait in her brain, and o'er it thrown,
Cull'd from the secret treasury of thought,
Each bright perfection mirror'd from her own ;
While, limner-like, imagination brought,
To further that sweet task, each hue that shone
In hope's delusive sky, until it bade
Her heart adore the idol it had made.

XLV.

Her vision was of one who never yet
Existed save in maiden's faultless dream ;
A youth, Apollo-like, with locks of jet,
And eyes lit up by love's undying beam ;
With lip new bath'd, and ever freshly wet
From the sweet draught of song's melodious stream,—
An angel shape, like theirs, who, born above,
Yet sold that heavenly resting-place for love.

XLVI.

Such was her dream, whose spirit, by the light
Of its own meteor, hope, was taught to err.
Did not her own heart tell her she was right
In loving him who had left all for her?
Love, woman's love, how else could she requite
The self-vow'd zeal of such a worshipper?
How could she ease his chain, unless she gave
The heart itself to him who was its slave?

XLVII.

And so 'twas giv'n; and day after day,
Like hope's still image, on her palace-tower,
Over the heaving waters far away,
From morn she gaz'd until the vesper hour;
And when that stranger vessel sought the bay,
'Twas he, she knew by love's prophetic power.
Alas! its voice, oracularly dim,
Told not that death had come along with him.

XLVIII.

And then within her bosom combatèd
Pity with shame, and love with virgin pride,
Till, like one reas'ning with her self, she said,
“ I am a king’s daughter, and should not hide
Myself from one who hath me guerdonèd
With his heart’s sacrifice, nor will I ’bide
Coldly within my palace-gate to see
Him who hath left friends, country, all for me.

XLIX.

“ I will go forth,” she said ; “ if these poor eyes,
Unseen, have flung such frenzy o’er his sense,
Sure I can pity, who am not more wise ;
And if in Heav’n some high intelligence
Hath thus together link’d our destinies
Into one common chain, say, what offence
Hast thou, poor fetter’d soul, in loving one
Bound unto thee before the world begun ?”

L.

Then calling, quick her maidens came and spread
 Around her form a star-inwoven veil,
Such as the moon puts on when over-head
 One fleecy cloud unfolds before the gale;
And underneath, save where a fleeting red
 Flush'd and then faded o'er its surface pale,
All bloodless seem'd her passion-varied cheek,
Like snow that fronts the sun on some far mountain-peak.

LI.

On thro' the town she went, and all gave way,
 As tho' by instinct, to a thing so fair;
She saw within the port the sun's last ray
 Shine on a stranger vessel anchor'd there,
And, by its light, the form of one who lay
 Propp'd in another's arms ;—why thro' the air
Rings the shrill echo of that sudden scream ?
It is but one who wakens from a dream.

LII.

As on the bough a newly-weanèd bird
One moment trembles ere it taketh wing,
E'en then the minstrel's parted lip was stirr'd,
As tho' the spirit there were balancing
His pinions spread to fly; but when he heard
That shriek so shrilly o'er the waters ring,
With a convulsive gasp he backward drew
Into his heart the life-breath ere it flew.

LIII.

And ere his sight return'd, he felt that she,
Of whom in death's embrace he was the slave,
Low at his side,—like one who bends the knee
To look into a freshly-filled grave,—
Was gazing on his eyes, as if to see
What life were left within for her to save;
Meanwhile her own, as falls the wintry rain
Over a wither'd blossom, wept in vain.

LIV.

“ Oh ! live for me !” she cried ; “ it cannot be
That thou wilt fly, and leave thine own to weep !
Oh, no !—thou art but wearièd, and we
Must waken still to watch thee in thy sleep ;
And if, perchance, the howling of the sea
Ring still within thine ears,—lo, we will steep
Thy dream in music, making ocean’s swell
Soft as the mimic murmur of a shell.

LV.

“ Sleep on, and when thou wakest from thy dream,
How sweet ’twill be to talk of all the past ;
And sweet, when thou art safe from it, shall seem
The idle roar of the remember’d blast
Which bore thee on thy way.—Lo ! now a gleam
Of life revisiteth thine eyes at last :
Me thou hast sought,—look up ;—lo ! here am I ;
Thanks be to God !—I knew he could not die !”

LVI.

“ Oh thus,” the minstrel cried, “ thus on the wave
Mine only pray’r hath been that we should meet ;
This was the only boon that I did crave
From coming death, to die before thy feet,
And in that land at least to find a grave
Wherein I might not live. Oh ! ’twill be sweet,
E’en in the tomb, to think that thou dost tread,
With haunting step, the green earth o’er my head.

LVII.

“ Oh, ladye mine, I die ; but make no moan
Thus, in life’s morn, to look upon mine end ;
Death has been in my thought till he has grown
Like the lov’d face of some familiar friend.
Farewell, Lucinde !—alas ! I am like one
Who doth o’er desart plains despairing wend,
Gnaw’d by the tiger thirst, and on the brink
Of the reach’d fountain, dies ere he can drink.

LVIII.

“ Farewell, Lucinde ! all flower-woven be
The linkèd hours that bid thee linger here ;
But let, amid thy smiles, one thought of me
Bedew sometimes their brightness with a tear :
Yet be not over-sorrowful ;—if we
May not together seek yon heavenly sphere,
Keep for me still the treasure of thy love,
And I will haste to hope for it above.

LIX.

“ I have liv’d long enough—I’ve seen thee kneel,
Yes thee, Lucinde ! in sorrow at my side,
And my cold cheek hath glow’d again to feel
Thy gushing tears, sweet mourner, angel-ey’d.
Love’s native soil is heav’n ! Earth would but steal
Each bright hue from its flower. Oh my bride !
Bearing a holier blossom, our’s shall be
Sown in the garden of eternity.

LX.

“ Bend closer still above me—I have yet
To ask from thee of earthly love a token.
Thou seest yon page’s eye—it is not wet,
No sound of idle grief his lip hath spoken ;
He hath no sorrow now—affection’s debt
Ere this hath long been paid—his heart is broken.
Death’s children are we both !—the elder, I
First claim my birthright—hastening to die.

LXI.

“ One grave shall hold us both ; as we have been
In life united, part us not in death.
Lay us together where the branches green
Make music ever echoing the breath
Of heav’n ; and if thy feet shall haunt the scene
Where he who dared to love thee slumbereth,
From us shall spring up, thro’ the pleasant grass,
Sweet summer flowers to kiss them as they pass.

LXII.

“ But let no anguish mingle with thy sorrow ;
Think of us as of twain who fled away
Ere yet the threaten’d storm of life’s to-morrow
Could darken o’er the sunshine of to-day.
Yes ! we have liv’d and lov’d—age cannot borrow
Aught from the past—we’ve wandered ’neath the ray,
And now at eve, together with the sun
We lay us down to sleep—our journey done.”

LXIII.

“ And shall there be but twain ?” the maiden cried :
“ Think ye the grave will hold no more than two ?
In life thou know’st I would have been thy bride,
And now in death there need be no adieu.
Love’s chain than life’s is stronger : o’er the tide
Of the wild ocean hast thou come to woo,
And wilt thou now, when I am all thine own,
Leave me to weep and wander forth alone ?

LXIV.

“ Oh let me follow thee—if dark the road,
More need of one along with thee to fare.
I ask not where or what thy sought abode,
So that the bride the bridegroom’s dwelling share.
On me each thought of bliss hast thou bestowed,
And now I claim one half of thy despair.
Young page, thou wrong’st me !—live ! ’tis I for whom
Are kept the cold embraces of the tomb !”

LXV.

“ No, not to thee, Lucinde ! no, not to thee,”
The minstrel feebly cried, “ to die is giv’n.
We twain, like to the foam of yonder sea,
On by the wind of destiny are driv’n ;
None mark, none mourn when we do cease to be.
But thou art like a seated star in heav’n,
Shedding sweet light on many who would grieve
Were its lov’d dwelling desolate at eve.

LXVI.

“ Live on and pray for us !—one moment, Death !
But one !—Lucinde, I see thee not—but feel
From thine o’erbending lip the fragrant breath,
Mingled with tears, along my temples steal.
Quick ! quick !—while yet the spirit hovereth,
Bend down !—one kiss !—ere yet my senses reel—
Thy lip, and, bird-like, thro’ its rosy gate
My soul, love-taught, shall wander to its mate.”

LXVII.

As oft, in April, on some garden-bed
A lily bends, o’erladen with its rain,
And when those hoarded tears to earth are shed,
Her pale brow raises heav’nward again ;
Thus o’er the youth that lady bends her head,
Then backward springs, as smit with sudden pain ;
Two living things they met,—but ere away
Lip could from lip be sunder’d,—one was clay !

LXVIII.

Uprose that lady then,—no sudden shriek
Rush'd from her lip along the silent air;
Her's was a sorrow which no cry could speak,
A grief not e'en the elements might share;
As of a statue seem'd her tearless cheek,
Fix'd in the frozen stillness of despair.
Like Niobe's, when first the spell was thrown,
And half of life still struggled with the stone.

LXIX.

Alas ! my tale is well nigh finishèd,
For sorrow now is made its only theme ;
Here would I gladly end, for he is dead
Who was and is the phantom of my dream ;
Death, like a traitor-guide, astray hath led
To his own shrine the pilgrim ; he did deem
That 'twas Love's altar shining thro' the gloom,
And, hast'ning, found the death-damp of the tomb.

LXX.

Was it for this, across the ocean-wave

He toil'd so long, with Leon at his side ?

Only for this ?—within a foreign grave

Entomb'd, to clasp corruption for his bride ?

The bold of heart, the beautiful, the brave !

Alas ! Rudel, thou should'st not thus have died :

When basest things around thee flourish'd—thou

Should'st not have bent to earth thy glorious brow.

LXXI.

But yet 'tis not for thee that we should weep ;

Sorrow can ne'er come nigh thy lonely dwelling ;

Death has no need of mourners,—we will keep

Our holiest grief for her whose heart is swelling

With hated life.—Oh ! would that I could steep

Each thought in tears, melodiously telling

Of thy sad fate, Lucinde, till all who heard

Should, with like drops, outnumber ev'ry word.

LXXII.

Our tears are thine alone, for Leon now
Death to himself hath mercifully taken ;
By the same wind together from the bough
Blossom and early bud to earth are shaken ;
Alas ! poor sister-blossom, why art thou
Thus doom'd to linger on, of both forsaken,
Till winter's hand each wither'd leaf may shed
Earthward, and reunite thee to the dead.

LXXIII.

Soon she bethought her of a pleasant scheme,
How they, death-parted, might together be.
Within her garden fair there was a stream,
Greenly o'erarched by many a graceful tree ;
Here was she wont in childish hour to dream
Of hope, and love, and happiness to be ;
And now in after-time, when hope was not,
Where could she find for grief a fitter spot ?

LXXIV.

She laid them there together—o'er their grave
No marble bust or monument was seen;
Only above, like some cathedral nave,
The deep boughs intertwin'd their roof of green,
Which, when the summer's wind did gently wave,
Oftime a wand'ring sun-beam stole between,
Like a returning soul, whom earthly love
Still lures below, tho' habitant above.

LXXV.

Hard by she built a fair pavilion,
Wherein love's mournful vigil she might keep.
A queen! that lowly grave was all her throne,
And all her sad prerogative—to weep.
Thro' all the weary day she felt alone,
But soon as eve came down from heav'n to steep
The green earth with her tears, she felt as tho'
A sister spirit came to share her woe.

LXXVI.

Then oped the eyes of heaven, and she felt
 Her chasten'd soul grow calm beneath their light;
The dark despair within it seem'd to melt,
 Steep'd in the starry stillness of the night ;
Then, as by that lone grave in pray'r she knelt,
 She seem'd an angel clad in robes of white,
Who by a good man's grave had ta'en her place,
 Ere the last trumpet sounded over space.

LXXVII.

'Twas thus one morn they found her, on her knees,
 With marble clasp'd hands, as if in pray'r ;
Her head was bow'd, and evermore the breeze
 Lifted the dark locks of her lustrous hair.
Death in the guise of sleep had come to seize,
 In mercy as she wept, the mourner there ;
The altar deck'd, the bridegroom at its side,
 Pale death, the priest, had come to fetch the bride.

N O T E S.

NOTE S.

NOTE 1.—PAGE 5.

Haste thee, Lucinde!—

Her real name was Melesinda, but the name which I have adopted was more grateful to my ear.

NOTE 2.—PAGE 6.

Like Procris slain by one who loved it well.

That this or any other classical allusion may not appear to be unsuited to the story or the time, I extract the following passage from a piece by one Pierre de Corbian, in which, with much seeming self-satisfaction, he describes the extent of his acquirements:—

“ Les sept arts liberaux, la grammaire, la langue Latine, qu'il sait très bien, la dialectique, la rhétorique, un peu de droit et du décret, beaucoup de musique suivant la méthode de Boece et de Gui Arelin, l'arithmetique, la géographie, &c. &c. &c. la necromancie, la geomancie, la magie, la divination, la mythologie plus qu' Ovide et Thales le Menteur—

les histoires de Thèbes—de Troie—de Rome, de Romulus, &c. &c. &c. L'histoire Grecque et celle d'Alexandre, qui en mourant partagea ses conquêtes entre ses douze pairs, &c. &c. L'histoire des Anglois, comment Brutus arriva de Troie dans la Bretagne, d'où il aborda en Angleterre, ou il vainquit le géant Cornieu, et fit la conquête de tout ce pays qui fut diversement partagé suivant le sort; les obscures prophéties de Merlin concernant les rois d'Angleterre. Les amours de Tristan et d'Issaut, &c. &c.”—Histoire Littéraire des Troubadours, composée d'après les Manuscrits de M. de St. Palaye, par M. L'Abbé Millot.

NOTE 3.—PAGE 6.

And beauty lov'd the passion-breathing lay.

“ Les cours presque aussi nombreuses que les châteaux les attirèrent à l'envi, ils y trouvèrent la fortune, les plaisirs, la considération encore plus flatteuse. Les belles dont ils célébraient les charmes et le mérite, ces divinités terrestres de la chevalerie, les accueillirent avec une générosité prévenante, quelquefois même avec la tendresse de l'amour. Combien d'encouragements pour des esprits que l'attrait de la nouveauté et le penchant naturel entraînoient dirai-je au plaisir, ou à l'étude.”—*Hist. Litt.*

NOTE 4.—PAGE 8.

*By whom, when eyes are dim and courage cold,
Their strength shall live, their loveliness be told.*

“ Les dames jalouses d'un encens, qui sembloit éterniser leurs charmes, ne manquaient pas de favoriser le poète adorateur.”

NOTE 5.—PAGE 10.

In sleep he knelt before his fancied bride.

“ J'aime un objet que je n'ai point vu, à qui je n'ai pu expliquer mes sentiments ni demander l'explication des siens. Chaque nuit, je m'endors plein de son image, et des songes enchanteurs l'offrent à moi. Le reveil hélas dissipe cette illusion—Je n'ouvre les yeux que pour apprendre qu'il m'est impossible de la voir.”—CHANSON.

NOTE 6.—PAGE 12.

Some for their God, but more for woman's glance.

“ Toutes leurs devotions n'empechoient pas nos heros de respirer sans cesse le carnage ni de servir ordinairement leurs belles avec autant et plus de ferveur que leur Dieu.”

NOTE 7.—PAGE 17.

Sunny Provenç, how beautiful thou art!

“ Sous un beau ciel, dans un pays favorisé de la nature, où la chaleur de climat excite l'esprit sans affaïsset le corps, le gout de la poesie doit être plus vif qu'ailleurs et plus fertile en productions. Telles étoient les provinces meridionales de la monarchie Francoise toutes comprises sous le nom commun de province, parceque la langue provençale leur étoit commune à toutes.”—*Hist. Litt.*

NOTE 8.—PAGE 34.

To help the widow and the fatherless.

Vous qui voulez l'ordre de chevalier,
 Il vous convient mener nouvelle vie,
 Devotement en oraison veillier
 Pechié fuir, orgueil et villenie.
 L'Eglise devez defendre
 La vefve aussi l'orphenin entreprendre;
 Estre hardis et le peuple garder;
 Pro doms loyaux sans rien de l'autruy prendre,
 Ainsi se doit chevalier gouverner.
Balade tirée des Poesies Manuscrites d'Eustache Deschamps.

NOTE 9.—PAGE 57.

*Doom'd, since from death its second life began,
 Ever to bear a sympathy with man.*

This flower, so celebrated in poetry, which bore inscribed upon its leaf the words **ΛΙ ΛΙ** in remembrance of the death of Hyacinthus, is certainly not that which we are accustomed to call the hyacinth. Martin, in a note on the Georgics, says, “I am pretty well satisfied that the flower celebrated by the poets is what we are now acquainted with under the name of *lilium floribus reflexis*, or martagon, and perhaps may be that very species which we call imperial martagon.”

NOTE 10.—PAGE 98.

With countless smiles immeasurably bright.

This is an attempt to render the *ανηγέθμον γελασμα* of the Prometheus.

NOTE 11.—PAGE 103.

Fall'n is that shrine where Cypris dwelt the while.

Here was a very celebrated temple of Venus, who rose from the sea in the immediate neighbourhood of the island.

THE END.

Gaylord 

PAMPHLET BINDER

Syracuse, N. Y.
Stockton, Calif.

